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ADOPTION OF AGREEMENTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

Note by the Secretary-General of the Conference

At its fourth session, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development approved for transmittal to the Conference the following non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (see decision 4/7).

Non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

PREAMBLE

(a) The subject of forests is related to the entire range of environmental and development issues and opportunities, including [the right to] socio-economic development.

(b) The guiding objective of these principles is to contribute to the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests and to provide for their multiple and complementary functions and uses.

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(c) Forestry issues and opportunities should be examined in a holistic and balanced manner within the overall context of environment and development, taking into consideration the multiple functions and uses of forests, including traditional uses, and the likely economic and social stress when these uses are constrained or restricted, as well as the potential for development that sustainable forest management can offer.

(d) [The process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is the most appropriate forum for conclusive decisions pertaining to global consensus on forests [which should form the basis for [any subsequent preparations and adoption of a legal instrument on forests] [all other negotiations involving forests]].

(e) These principles should apply to all types of forests, both natural and planted, in all geographic regions and climatic zones, including austral, boreal, subtemperate, temperate, subtropical and tropical.

(f) All types of forests embody complex and unique ecological processes which are the basis for the present and potential capacity of forests to provide resources to satisfy human needs as well as environmental values, and as such their sound management and conservation is of concern to the Governments of the countries to which they belong [and to the world community] [and are of interest to the world community only in so far as they pertain to international cooperation].

(g) [Forests are essential to economic development and the maintenance of all forms of life. States have the right to utilize their forests in accordance with their development needs. Adequate management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests require sustainable production and consumption patterns in all countries [particularly in developed countries.] [It is also linked to remunerative prices for forest products that embody the full environmental and replacement cost, as well as the easing of the debt burden and the eradication of poverty in developing countries.] [The globally shared benefits of wise forest management and conservation should be supported by all beneficiary countries while recognizing the [special role] [sovereign right] of the countries [to which they belong]].]

(h) Recognizing that the responsibility for forest management, conservation and sustainable development is in many States allocated among federal/national, state/provincial and local levels of government, each State, in accordance with its constitution and/or national legislation, should pursue these principles at the appropriate level of government.

PRINCIPLES/ELEMENTS

1. (a) "States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies and have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction".

(b) [The [agreed] [full] incremental cost of achieving [national] [global] benefits associated with forest conservation and sustainable development requires increased international cooperation and should be equitably shared by the international community].

2. (a) States have the sovereign and inalienable right to utilize, manage and develop their forests in accordance with their development needs and level of socio-economic development and on the basis of national policies consistent with sustainable development and legislation, including the conversion of such areas for other uses within the overall socio-economic development plan and based on rational land-use policies.

(b) Forest resources and forest lands should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual human needs of present and future generations. These needs are for forest products and services, such as wood and wood products, water, food, fodder, medicine, fuel, shelter, employment, recreation, habitats for wildlife, landscape diversity, and other forest products. Appropriate measures should be taken to protect forests against harmful effects of pollution, including air-borne pollution, fires, pests and diseases in order to maintain their full multiple value.

(c) The provision of timely, reliable and accurate information on forests and forest ecosystems is essential for public understanding and informed decision-making and should be ensured.

(d) Governments should promote and provide opportunities for the participation of interested parties, including local communities and indigenous people, industries, labour, non-governmental organizations and individuals, forest dwellers and women, in the development, implementation and planning of national forest policies.

3. (a) National policies and strategies should provide a framework for increased efforts, including the development and strengthening of institutions and programmes for the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests and forest lands.

(b) International institutional arrangements, building on those organizations and mechanisms already in existence, as appropriate, should facilitate international cooperation in the field of forests.

(c) All aspects of environmental protection and social and economic development as they relate to forests and forest lands should be integrated and comprehensive.

4. The vital role of all types of forests in maintaining the ecological processes and balance at the local, national, regional and global levels through, inter alia, their role in protecting fragile ecosystems, watersheds and freshwater resources and as rich storehouses of biodiversity and biological resources and sources of genetic material for biotechnology products, as well as [carbon fixation], should be recognized.

5. (a) National forest policies should recognize and duly support the identity, culture and the rights of indigenous people, their communities and other communities and forest dwellers. Appropriate conditions should be promoted for these groups to enable them to have an economic stake in forest use, perform economic activities, and achieve and maintain cultural identity and social organization, as well as adequate levels of livelihood and well-being, through, inter alia, those land tenure arrangements which serve as incentives for the sustainable management of forests.

(b) The full participation of women in all aspects of the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests should be actively promoted.

6. (a) All types of forests play an important role in meeting energy requirements through the provision of a renewable source of bio-energy, particularly in developing countries, and the demands for fuelwood for household and industrial needs should be met through sustainable forest management, afforestation and reforestation. To this end, the potential contribution of plantations of both indigenous and introduced species for the provision of both fuel and industrial wood should be recognized.

(b) National policies and programmes should take into account the relationship, where it exists, between the conservation, management and sustainable development of forests and all aspects related to the production, consumption, recycling and/or final disposal of forest products.

(c) Decisions taken on the management, conservation and sustainable development of forest resources should benefit, to the extent practicable, from a comprehensive assessment of economic and non-economic values of forest goods and services and of the environmental costs and benefits. The development and improvement of methodologies for such evaluations should be promoted.

(d) The role of planted forests and permanent agricultural crops as sustainable and environmentally sound sources of renewable energy and industrial raw material should be recognized, enhanced and promoted. Their contribution to the maintenance of ecological processes, to offsetting pressure on primary/old-growth forest and to providing regional employment and development with the adequate involvement of local inhabitants should be recognized and enhanced.

(e) Natural forests also constitute a source of goods and services, and their conservation, sustainable management and use should be promoted.

7. (a) Efforts should be made to promote a supportive international economic climate conducive to sustained and environmentally sound development of forests in all countries, which include, inter alia, the promotion of sustainable patterns of production and consumption, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of food security.

(b) [Financial resources for economic adjustment should be provided for the other sectors of the economy of developing countries with substantive forest cover which set aside more than their fair share of [undisturbed] [natural] forests for the purpose of conservation].

[Any developing country possessing a forest cover that exceeds its present economic and ecological needs should benefit from specific financial arrangements to ensure sustainable development, particularly of the forestry sector].

[Resources should be provided for investment in globally beneficial forest conservation through cooperative arrangements between countries and appropriate market-based mechanisms, and in the context of internationally agreed strategies].

8. (a) Efforts should be undertaken towards the greening of the world [by all countries] [in all geographical areas] [particularly] [notably] [in developed countries], [which have in the past so destroyed their extensive forests and continue to do so by means of acid rain] to increase their forest cover, [and these countries should take positive and transparent action to increase their forest cover through reforestation and afforestation [and conservation of existing forests] [as well as by maintaining, as far as practicable, existing forest cover] [where beneficial]. [In this context, cooperative arrangements between countries for economically efficient joint implementation of forest management activities should be encouraged.]

(b) Efforts to maintain and increase forest cover and forest productivity should be undertaken in ecologically, economically and socially sound ways through the rehabilitation, reforestation and re-establishment of trees and forests on unproductive, degraded and deforested lands, as well as through the management of existing forest resources.

(c) The implementation of national policies and programmes aimed at forest management, conservation and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, should be supported by international financial and technical cooperation, including through the private sector, where appropriate.

(d) [Sustainable forest management and use should be carried out in accordance with [internationally accepted] [formally agreed in multilateral forums] environmentally sound [national] guidelines.]

(e) Forest management should be integrated with management of adjacent areas so as to maintain ecological balance and sustainable productivity.

(f) National policies and/or legislation aimed at management, conservation and sustainable development of forests should include the protection of [ecologically viable] representative or unique examples of forests, including primary/old-growth forests, cultural, spiritual, historical, religious and other unique and valued forests of national importance.

(g) [Availability of biological resources, including genetic material, shall be with due regard to the sovereign rights of the countries where the forests are located and to the sharing of technology and profits from biotechnology products, for example, pharmaceutical products, that are derived from these resources.] (Note: subject to convention on biodiversity)

(h) National policies should ensure that environmental impact assessments are carried out where [government] actions are likely to have significant adverse impacts on important forest resources.

9. (a) [The external indebtedness, in particular of developing countries, [the phenomenon of net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries], the inaccurate economic valuation of forest products and the lack of effective market forces are among the major factors that reduce the capacity and ability of [developing] countries to manage, conserve and develop their forest resources, and national and international policies should be devised to redress such problems in the broader context of a supportive international economic environment.]

Alternative: [The external indebtedness, in particular of developing to developed countries, the phenomenon of net transfer of resources to developed countries, the inadequate prices for forest products below full replacement cost, and the lack of effective market forces are among the major factors that reduce the capacity and ability of developing countries to manage, conserve and develop their forest resources, and international policies should be devised to redress such problems in the broader context of a supportive international economic environment.]

(b) The problems that hinder efforts to attain the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and that stem from the lack of alternative options available to local communities, in particular the urban poor and poor rural populations who are economically and socially dependent on forests and forest resources, should be addressed by Governments and the international community.

(c) [Policy formulation with respect tc forests should take account of the pressures and demands imposed on forest ecosystems and resources from causes outside the forest sector, both domestically and internationally, and means of dealing with these pressures and demands should be [sought] [considered]].

10. [Developing countries should be compensated for the opportunity cost foregone [, including historical loss of primary forest cover,] and the comparatively higher cost entailed [in the short term by] [international cooperation is required to assist developing countries in meeting the higher cost entailed in] [increasing forest cover and sustainable management and conservation of their forest resources [in order to maintain biological diversity and climatic stability].]]

11. [[New] [Adequate] and additional] financial resources should be provided to developing countries through [existing mechanisms, both bilateral and multilateral,] [a global fund] to enable them to sustainably manage, [enhance], conserve and develop their forests' resources, including afforestation, reforestation, and combating deforestation and forest and land degradation.

12. [The transfer of environmentally sound [appropriate] technology to developing countries], [Technology cooperation in environmentally sound technologies] [, including on concessional and preferential terms,] [Joint development of technology relevant to the conservation and sustainable utilization of biological diversity, including genetic material in gene banks, as well as those technologies that make use of forest resources, including biological resources and genetic material for other purposes such as pharmaceuticals etc.] should be promoted to enable developing countries to enhance their endogenous capacity and to better manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

13. (a) Scientific research, forest inventories and assessments carried out by national institutions which take into account, where relevant, biological, physical, social and economic variables, as well as technological development and its application in the field of sustainable forest management, conservation and development, should be strengthened through effective modalities, including international cooperation. In this context, attention should also be given to research and development of sustainably harvested non-wood products.

(b) National and, where appropriate, regional and international institutional capabilities in education, training, science, technology, economics, anthropology and social aspects of forests and forest management are essential to the conservation and sustainable development of forests and should be strengthened.

(c) International exchange of information on the results of forest and forest management research and development should be enhanced and broadened, as appropriate, making full use of education and training institutions, including those in the private sector.

(d) Appropriate indigenous capacity and local knowledge regarding the conservation and sustainable development of forests should, through institutional and financial support, and in collaboration with the people in local communities concerned, be recognized, respected, recorded, developed

[compensated] and, as appropriate, introduced in the implementation of programmes.

14. (a) Trade in forest products should be based on non-discriminatory and multilaterally agreed rules and procedures consistent with international trade law and practices. In this context, open and free international trade in forest products should be facilitated.

(b) [Removal of tariff barriers and impediments to] the provision of better market access and better prices for higher value-added forest products and their local processing should be encouraged to enable producer countries to better conserve and manage their renewable forest resources.

(c) Incorporation of environmental costs and benefits into market forces and mechanisms, in order to achieve forest conservation and sustainable development, should be encouraged both domestically and internationally.

(d) Forest conservation and sustainable development policies should be integrated with economic, trade [and other relevant] policies.

(e) [Fiscal, trade, industrial, transportation and other policies and practices that may lead to forest degradation should be avoided. Economic or other incentives aimed at sound forest management practices should be encouraged.]

15. (a) [All forms of unilateral action to restrict and/or ban the use of timber and other forest products in international trade should be removed, as such actions are counter-productive in terms of long-term sustainable forest management [, and relevant national legislation should be promulgated to prohibit all such unilateral restrictions and/or bans].]

(b) [Orderly and] free international trade in forest products [from sustainably managed forest resources] should be facilitated.

16. Pollutants, particularly air-borne pollutants, including those responsible for acidic deposition, that are harmful to the health of forest ecosystems at the local, national, [trans-boundary] and global levels should be [strictly] controlled [, where necessary].

17. [Forests constitute a [significant] reservoir of carbon and [their role in the global carbon cycle] should be [recognized] [taken into account] and considered [as appropriate] [in the development of national forest policies and plans].]